

National

Andhra Pradesh renews moves to exploit beach sands

M Somasekhar Hyderabad | Updated on March 12, 2018 | Published on May 04, 2015



The Andhra Pradesh Government has unveiled big plans to dig into its rich heavy mineral beach sand reserves to foster the growth of mineral-based and value-added industries.

The State has identified Srikakulam district, whose beach sands along the coastline consist of Ilmenite, Rutile, Zircon, Garnet, Monazite among other minerals.

Call for investment

State-owned AP Mineral Development Corporation (APMDC) has called for a global expression of interest for setting up an integrated project for

development of heavy mineral beach sands in a joint venture. It covers exploration and mining, mineral separation, as well as value-added plants for the minerals, with the last date as May 30. In the JV, the Corporation will contribute to the equity in the form of mining leases, both land-owned and acquired, and sweat equity for facilitating various statutory clearances, in addition to equity infusion.

According to existing rules, the Corporation has to hold a 75-per-cent equity, while in the mineral separation and value addition, the private partner can hold a majority stake. A separate special purpose vehicle and equity structure can also be worked out, said V Girija Shanker, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director.

Ilmenite is an important ore in making Titanium dioxide pigment, titanium sponge, titanium chloride and titanium metal. These value-added products have extensive use in industries, he told *BusinessLine*. The Corporation plans to offer leases in four areas with significant deposits in Srikakulam district.

Areas identified

The first area consists of the villages of Kuppili, Kotapalem and Mentada, where an area of 1,284 hectares with estimated reserves of 2.34 million tonnes have been established. The second area is of Koyyam, Bouthta and Koduru with 1,049 hectares and 1.41 million tonnes, and the third is of Kuppili and Koyyam villages, consisting of 1,000 hectares and 10.99 million tonnes.

The fourth and final area is of Dharamavaram, Bonthala and Konduru villages where exploration has to be done. An earlier attempt to exploit beach sands in Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam by the YS Rajasekhara Reddy government in 2006 had ended in a major controversy.

The multi-million dollar mining project involving top Indian politicians, a Ukrainian billionaire and his business conglomerate, and Indian-origin US residents, was reportedly scrapped in November 2014.

The AP Government had signed an MoU with Bothli Trade, a Swiss Company in 2006. DF Group – part of the conglomerate – based out of the British Virgin Islands, had offered to set up production facilities with investments of about ₹4,500 crore. They were allocated mining leases in Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts.

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